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SUBJECT: PNCR-1G COMES TO PARLIAMENT) DEBATE PRESIDENT,S
SPEECH

Classified By: Ambassador David M. Robinson. Reason 1.4(d)

1.(U) After boycotting the ceremonial opening of the Ninth Parliament on September 28, all 22 members of the main opposition party, the People,s National Congress Reform-One Guyana (PNCR-1G) attended Parliament yesterday and were finally sworn in as Members. Despite his poor showing in the recent national elections, PNCR-1G party leader Robert Corbin returned, unopposed, as the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

2.(U) Once sworn in, the PNCR-1G members participated in a debate on a Motion to accept the President,s speech delivered at the ceremonial opening of the Parliament. The ruling People,s Progressive Party Civic (PPP/C) supported the speech, stating that the President,s "comprehensive work plan" for the administration - highlighted by the strengthening of security and public safety - should be supported by all in the House. Noting that the opposition,s scrutiny of the government is integral in the promotion a vibrant democracy, Corbin warned that "the willingness of the present administration to accept constructive criticism will be placed on immediate test." According to Corbin, the opposition supports the plan laid out by the President, but fears that it will be just another broken promise made by the current administration.

3.(C) Comment: The PNCR-1G,s arrival in Parliament this week, after boycotting the September 28 opening, is yet another sign of the party,s lack of direction. Their flip-flop approach to decisions - first they were boycotting the elections (then they weren,t), next they were boycotting Parliament (then they weren,t) - coupled with their poor election results, show a party in decline.

ROBINSON